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Post-Operative Instructions for Carpal Tunnel Release

You may remove your surgical bandage after two days. However, you **must keep the incision dry** until the sutures are removed at your follow-up doctor's appointment. You can use water proof Band-Aids to keep your incision dry. When you are done showering, remove the waterproof Band-Aid. If you still wish to cover your incision, you can use a regular Band-Aid. It is okay to leave your incision open to the air when not showering. **Do not use ointments of any kinds.**

Please call the office to schedule an appointment for suture removal. The sutures are removed 7-10 days after your procedure. **Two days after your sutures are removed**, if the skin is completely closed, you will need to start massaging the scar. You will place your finger on the scar, and maintaining pressure move your finger in circles, diagonals, up and down, and side to side. Do this all along the length of the scar. Do not rub the skin, move the skin.

It is common to have post-operative pain. You may wrap a bag of frozen peas or crushed ice in a thin towel and place on your incision for **15 minutes of every hour** while you are awake. Elevating your hand above heart level on several pillows will also help with post-operative pain. You should take the prescribed medication **only as needed and as prescribed**. If you are having increased pain, you may take an anti-inflammatory medication such as Advil, Motrin or Aleve with you pain medication.

You will get a removable splint, if you do not already have one, which should be worn only in public or during moderate to heavy activity to protect the incision. However, during most of the day you do not need to wear the splint.

You can use your hand to dress yourself, comb your hair, and do self-care activities immediately after surgery, as tolerated. You can do light work such as typing and using the telephone the day following surgery. **It will take 4 to 6 weeks before you can perform strenuous work.**

You can start the exercises provided or Occupational Therapy on the **2nd or 3rd** day after surgery. Expect to spend 7 to 10 minutes doing your exercises.